

LESKERNICK DIARY 1998 – BARBARA BENDER

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Thursday, June 11 1998

Dear Sue,
Not much cop, but
heavily censored!

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By the late afternoon, the wind went down and the sun came out. I went by the Chris/Henry caravan. They were recovering from over exposure to the elements. Drinking tea. We talked about the exhibition. Chris was anxious that while we might *talk* about it, we might not actually get on with it. But I felt very positive. I also felt that, since Chris will be doing much of the comparative settlement work, I could make the exhibition my responsibility. That's not to say that other people won't be involved but I'll make sure that it keeps moving along.

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We agreed that we'd need to get out a short resume so that Henry would have something to take around to various local places - museums, art galleries, libraries, perhaps schools. And we agreed that, over the Summer and Autumn, he and Patrick could start to get the venues and dates sorted out. Meanwhile I'd do some costing and think about grants. Come the spring term, we'd start assembling the text and the photos etc. And then, over Easter, we'd have a workshop at Hooken and put the whole thing together.

Talking with Henry I began to feel that maybe, when he and Patrick have got further along in their work on questions of Cornish identity and attitudes to the past, they might want to think about another exhibition. And I'm certainly hoping that I can do something with Neil Jarman in northern Ireland. Once we've done all this we'll be in a strong position to really think through the whole idea of communicating with local people, creating dialogues, getting people involved, and providing mobile, flexible exhibitions that could move between small museums and libraries - places that are strapped for cash and find it hard to inject change in their exhibits. Exhibitions that could also go to schools and other places we haven't even thought of.

I would like us to create something that would work at a local level, but also work at TAG or in a University context. We discussed the idea of having plastic pockets or whatever in which more detail could be presented so people have a choice about the level at which they engage with the exhibition and the aspects of the exhibition that they engage with. Thus they might be interested in 'Art and Archaeology' - no problem, a couple of sheets on that; or 'Excavation Techniques', 'Wall structures', 'Clitter Structures' and so on. And as well they'd be questionnaires and flipcharts.

I liked the idea of involving Tony Blackman and thought we could use some of his childrens' drawings. Chris was against - mainly, I think, because he doesn't want Tony's rather functionalist way of seeing the world to be part of the exhibition. He said he thought it would be patronising to use childrens' work. It might be, but it doesn't have to be. At anyrate, we agreed that we could use photos of Tony's house reconstructions. We'd also fire people's imaginings by finding ethnographic photos of shrine-stones and offerings, house interiors and so on.

I've put together a brief outline. We'll talk it through tomorrow, and then, in the evening when the archaeologists come to supper, I'll put it to them and see what they think. It seems important to have a framework for them to react to rather than just saying 'What do you think we should have in an exhibition?'

It was a strange day today. Didn't seem to do much and was buffeted by the wind. But the conversation with Pete was good. He stays with a topic while he thinks it through. Like he'd been on Codda with Chris and Henry and hadn't been impressed by the clutter structures. But he was at pains to stress that he did think that the strange forms and shapes in the clutter would have had meaning for the Leskernick people, it was just that he didn't think that they had actually *moved* the stones. He was very determined that it should be understood that he was not a functionalist. And so too, he mulled the questions that I asked about his reaction to our work, and how we should communicate it, and then, in more detail, pondered the more detailed questions of walls and cairns, sequence and subsistence. He has very strong views – a very strongly imagined sense – of how the prehistoric people lived at Leskernick. He *sees* them as specialist pastoralists that lived up on the hill right through the seasons. There's no particular reason why he should be right, they could have had a mixed economy. They could have been there on a seasonal basis. It's just that he doesn't *see* it that way.

I was anxious about whether the recording had worked. It has, though it's a little faint.

Saturday, June 13 1998

Another lamentable day - weatherwise.

I'd left my car lights on whilst I was up on site the day before yesterday and so had a flat battery and had to leave the car up at Westmoorgate. I got a lift from Chris back to the campsite and yesterday morning Penni drove me up and we tried to get the car going with jumpleads. We failed. The very nice man who lives at Westmoorgate (Brian Sharman) appeared, took the battery off and put it on charge. This morning we put it back in and it started instantly. Wonderful. I gave Brian a bottle of whiskey!

The weather being so lousy I then drove back to the campsite. Chris had gone home to look after the twins. Henry, Wayne, Patrick and I decamped to my caravan. Henry had been excited about a conversation they'd all had about the exhibition the night before, I wanted to get down something about an earlier discussion we'd had at Brockabarrow, and also something about the discussion I'd had the night before with the archaeologists.

After a short while I remembered I hadn't put the little 'cap' inside Alan's microphone. I put it in. Towards the end of the tape I thought I'd better test. It was terrible. I could, very faintly, hear something. Very pissed off. Continued the conversation using my own microphone. No problem. The others have now gone off to Truro museum and I guess the first thing I should do – in case the tape is a total wash-out - is to reconstruct some of the conversation.

Henry led off. Last night he'd asked the others to tell him about the discussion we'd had at Brockabarrow. The others had mentioned Chris's idea that the exhibition should go to a supermarket. Henry had, apparently, been very cross. For all the reasons that he mentions on the piece of paper he's given me. But the conversation had swung round and the important point, which Patrick had made, was that it would be interesting to explore the clientele, communications, responses to exhibition etc. within a supermarket as opposed to a museum or library context, but that the important thing was that it should occur *after* the exhibition had gone to local places. ie local people should feel, in the first instance, that it was theirs. Later they could see it in the supermarket.

They'd also discussed the logistics of the exhibition. It would, for eg., be important and interesting to take it to local shows, markets etc., but how could this be done? I suggested that it would be up to Henry and Patrick - if they wanted to try different venues they'd have to do it as and when it suited their time-tables.

Then we talked a bit about what had happened up on Brockabarrow and how it contrasted with my conversation last night with the archaeologists. I said that it had seemed to me that we had mainly talked about ideas, whereas the archaeologists – Sue in particular – had been more concerned to talk about finance etc. At Brockabarrow, over lunch, I'd tried out on the others a first go round of what the exhibition might contain. To my relief they'd seemed

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pretty positive. Chris, as well as suggesting that the exhibition should go to Safeways – 'It'd be more democratic' – also worried that there wasn't enough on the sociological aspects of the enterprise - the reflexive movement between what we experienced and our interpretations of the past. So we thought maybe that there should be a final board on 'The Present Past': a montage of our and the visitors' sense of place. Talking about this again this morning with Henry, Wayne and Patrick, it also seemed a good idea to use this last board to get across the idea that people need to know more about the past and the creation of landscapes in order to be able to take responsibility. Wayne pointed out how few people actually 'know' the moors - so who was supposed to be taking responsibility? I said that probably it was more - or as - important to consider people's imaginings about the moors: you didn't have to 'know' them intimately in order to take responsibility.

Wayne mentioned that, at Brockbarrow, he'd tried to get across the idea that we - the people working on the hill - weren't all specialists, that there were also ordinary people. And that this was a way of bridging the gap between the visitors and us. I said I didn't like this lumpen category of 'ordinary people' – after all we were often specialists in one context, bog ordinary in another.

I guess we talked for almost an hour before I tested, so there must have been much more besides.

Going back to last night's supper with the archaeologists. It was OK, though, to be honest, the bit I liked best was talking to Gary and Ash before the others arrived. When we got onto the exhibition, there was an awful lot of talk about finances and logistics. Such talk was necessary but not confirming. It seemed that, by and large, they were happy enough with the suggested themes, though Ash didn't like the Present Past. I guess it's unfair to be critical - no-one, or most people, can't absorb this sort of information when it's suddenly presented to them. And maybe, too, they were a bit inhibited about talking in front of each other.

The upshot was, I think, that Sue would like to see the text, but is more interested in the visuals, and is happy to liaise with Peter H. and Tony Blackman. Gary would like to be involved. Fay, who wasn't there, might well like to be involved. Ash is interested in the computer side of things.

Sunday, June 14

Went home last night – ostensibly to pick up Jan. But it became clear that he wouldn't be ready for an early morning departure, so came back on my own and went straight up to Leskernick. Henry arrived shortly afterwards. He and I sorted out how we'd talk with the Devon Archaeological Society and he went off to escort them from Westmoorgate.

They arrived. The weather was reasonable – cloudy but warm – and they were a jolly crowd. I knew four of them from other times and places and that made it easier. I gave a general opening introduction and found myself waxing lyrical about how and why we need both the excavation and the survey work. Slightly aware that Henry might be grinning. Talking about wrapping the stones, the sociology, the exhibition. It felt good because they were so responsive and came up with interesting questions. Then Henry took them off. That, too, went well. We had given them each a copy of the survey and that, I think, also made them feel that they had 'got something'.

While Henry was taking them round I went on checking things on my master plan, and then we all met back in house 45 for lunch. *All* of them diligently filled out Henry's questionnaire, with much pencil sucking as they tried to remember the names of places. Lots of questions and chat. Eventually, as we handed them over to Sue, they gave us a clap. Felt like a proper bit of communication.

Henry and I did a narrative tape of the northern most wall of the western settlement. It was very fine working at that detail. And also a laugh!

Finished around 4, had an interesting talk with Sue about the centre stone of the southern circle, and then a drink in the Rising Sun. Its good to see Henry so contented and in his skin, and fired up about his research.

We'd given Patrick a lift to Alternum to meet an informant. He discovered that he lived near the Rising Sun and so popped his head into the pub on his way to find him. Patrick seems to have gotten into interviewing – his informants on site certainly seem to enjoy themselves!

Invited in for a curry with Henry and Chris. [bit of censorship here ...]

I still think that this project is absolutely special and that we must bring it to fruition, and that to do so we must all talk to each other. We don't have to be 'best friends' but there does have to be some easefulness so that ideas can move back and forth.

Monday, June 15

A short chat with a still somewhat distraught Sue. Oh dear, I find it so difficult. I feel so passionately that we need to all work together. I accept that if Chris and Sue don't get on, they don't get on. But if we block the channels between the archaeologists and anthropologists then, by definition, we block some of the flow - and negate some of the aims - of the project. Anyway, there's time yet, and I sort of feel that something will sort.

A fine day. A FINE DAY! Drove up to Rough Tor with Wayne and Sarah, stopping at Camelford on the way. Walked, in a liesurely fashion, round the base. No sign of Chris, Henry and Patrick, who had gone on before. Finally we stumbled on them - they'd been hiding! Slow start - I was trying not to be the first to suggest we move - I sort of felt they were testing to see how long it would take before I got restive. I got restive ...

It was beautiful though. We were sitting in one of the houses - the one with the big backstone. Interesting how we tend to always come to rest inside a house. A very wide view to the hills to the west with cloud shadows scudding. Skylarks hovering ...

Chris suggested that we fan out and move up the hillside flagging potential clitter workings. I assumed he meant that we kept fairly close together so that we didn't miss anything. I was a bit scared about how I'd cope with clitter climbing, but, as it goes, it wasn't as hard as it looked. Tiring though. Going up the hill (concave as Wayne later said, rather than convex at Leskernick) there was first a gentle bracken slope with relatively little clitter - clitter spread rather than tumble (Chris). I didn't actually see anything in this 'zone' - though, as it turned out, there was stuff. Then came the clitter tumble. So much more massive than on Leskernick. Everything big scale, rock upon rock, caverns and holes and tumbles and gullies. No - I'm making it sound rather more dramatic than it is. But still precipitous. I did find a 'structure' - a

circular collection of rocks, and then noticed a wall going off from it up the hill. Then another 'feature' - but this time I felt that it wasn't so much that something had been 'done' but rather that it was something memorable. Something that would be noticed. Acknowledged, perhaps attended to. I wondered, too, whether some of these rocks upon rocks weren't then re-invoked in other settings. Propped stones, reared up stones, capstones, cist-like places. All in this awesome setting, below the awesome tor. People would come to the ceremonies, they would be attentive to these stones. They would then, perhaps, at home, re-invoke them on their own hillsides. The quoit at Leskernick for example? Sarah, who says very little, and was obviously finding it impossible to 'see' stones that might have been moved said 'What does it matter? It's the meaning that matters.' (or something like that). I knew what she meant. It was important to explore the clitter to try and understand a little how people might have been responsive to certain settings. Things -stones - having been moved might be part of the story, but only part.

Above the clitter tumble, and below the silhouetted, laminated, precarious pile-up of the tor, was an area of large tabular rocks. Much broken. Very powerful and with, it seemed to me, no structures. Rather there were some large slabbish boulders that could have been used in ritual performances - permitting dramatic appearances. There was also, at this level of the hillside, little grassy aprons. This part of the slope was very awe inspiring - a transitional space between the clitter which though powerful was 'used' by the people living on the slopes below, and the high tor which was sacred space and only to be approached by appropriate people, or at least in appropriate ways, and at special times.

I suddenly realised that I was on my own. Everyone had gone. I suppose I felt rather tricked - why weren't we still together? Why were Henry and Chris at the bottom of the hill? How could we 'cover' the hill if we didn't move up it together? I was angry and I came down towards Wayne really blasting off. He quietened me down and started showing me some of the things he'd found. It was fascinating - Wayne was completely transfixed by 'holes'! I won't pursue this theme - but it's true... He showed me some possible cists and chambers and capstones. Yes ... perhaps. But again, I preferred the idea that, like Australian aborigines who place the bones of the dead in the crevices of the quarries which are the ancestral beings, so, here, people would use these crevices and holes between the rocks perhaps to place the remains of the dead, or to place offerings. I wondered - probably idly - whether there

wasn't some gendering of interpretation going on here, with the men wanting things to be 'moved', altered, wedged, propped etc. and the women wanting to go with what was there ...

We returned back to our house, and had an early lunch. The sky was very clear blue, the tor was very immediate. The settlement area, which stretches out below the bracken area (though there are a few houses in the bracken) seems very open. There's very little clutter. Or so it seems looking down. And it's much scuffed by animals. It seems rather African-like (as I imagine!) - beaten earth and skuffedness and the stone bones of the houses protruding here and there. Because of the skuffing it also seemed rather lived in - the people had just gone for a while ...

Henry took me off to look at some of the houses and, in particular, a wonderful firm perimeter wall. Two orthostatic flanks with, here and there, the rubble in between. Another wall with a really fine gate-way flanked by two uprights. Everything's grander than at Leskernick.

We crossed the marshy area and went to the stone circle. From the centre the tor on Garrow was in line with the tor on Rough Tor. Again, the circle had many more stones than the Leskernick ones. And, as Chris later said, all the spaces - circle, marsh, settlement, clutter, tor are far more discrete than at L.

We found a dead sheep mired in the marsh.

After lunch, we tracked between flags - flags that had been put up by each and everyone of us. I made notes (wished I had a tape recorder) of how things were described, how descriptions got modified, how they were interpreted, how interpretations got modified. I tried to record who said what, and we tried to make it so that different people started the discussion. We agreed that we didn't have to agree ... Of course, as usual, in the end, Chris was the most incisive and we tended to pick up from him! And Sarah and Patrick tended to keep quiet ... (Patrick noted things down in his book the whole time - I guess we were definitely under 'observation').

We started in the bracken. I won't go into the discussions - I'll type them out some time. I was cautious, I didn't want to just be swept along. I wanted to feel my way. I could see why Chris or Henry or whoever saw what they saw, and oftentimes it did seem that things had been, just subtly - or sometimes

less subtly -, moved. It was interesting, in one place there was a row of three tabular stones which Chris called a facade, I called a backstop, ie we agreed they had been placed. And then we found they were part of - an *enhanced* part of - a wall. It seems that - at least as far as I'm concerned - I find linear structures easier to 'see' and to feel reasonably confident about. But then, coming at things slowly, talking round them, recasting what we saw, I did become convinced that some stones had been put up, some places had been cleared. There was one fine flat grounder absolutely clear of stones with a grand monolith set towards the back of it. The monolith was flanked by two or three smaller uprights. It seemed like an offering table (or as depicted in a fine drawing by Wayne, a little stage). Other places, there were repetitive semi-circular arcs of stones. There were a couple of stone piles - cairns. And one, as it turned out, was within a wall. We noticed that on the whole the grounders - some of which were gigantic, like huge limbs from some Egyptian pharaoh - were untouched. Except for one which was near to a house and which had two slabs set close together at one end and a flanking stone.

We stopped for tea. It's one of the times when I most mind not smoking. I watch out the corner of my eye as Henry teases the tobacco into the paper and manipulates tobacco, paper, pouch ... I wanted to take a picture of Chris lighting fag. He crouches over it (to avoid the wind) like someone making obeisance to a small god. I'll have to get a photo of that.

After tea went on for another hour. It was tiring. Clambering the clitter you realised how - often - it was clitter upon clitter upon clitter. There was a sense of places within and underneath the stones.

And so home. Wonderful strolling around the base of Rough Tor. Nice conversation with Sarah ...

Had thought we'd all go into town for a meal with Jan - who had arrived -, but Chris and Henry were tired and Wayne offered to cook for Jan and me. A very nice evening. Wayne has created a little 'home' in his caravan - music, table cloth, seat coverings. The meal was delicious and Wayne and I rabbitted on about the clitter. Who would have thought there was so much to say! I remembered that at the clitter mass that I described earlier as an offering table Wayne had noticed the acoustics - which was probably why in his drawing it got transformed into a stage. But the sounds do carry and that's another

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element to the hill. Partly Wayne and I were trying - rather sideways on - to fire Jan's imagination.

I keep forgetting to mention that Chris has suggested a couple of days ago, after he'd gone around Codda with Pete Herring and Pete had noted the sense of swirling spirals within the clitter, that the shamans in their trance state might have been particularly susceptible to these swirling patterns and that they then during their ceremonies might have moved among the clitter 'knowing' which stones should be moved, which features enhanced. As someone said, up on the hill, 'enhance' isn't the right word. If the rocks were so powerful it was more that you were homaging them.

Last thing. I think that originally when Chris suggested that we look at other settlements it was mainly in terms of structural differences and similarities. And that's certainly been part of what we've been doing. But working at Rough Tor has also opened up a sense of contact, movement, relationships between Leskernick and the outside world. Chris said today he thought that the Rough Tor people - leaders - were screwing the Leskernick people. Making demands on them for tin or whatever. I'm not sure. Its obvious that, for the people of Leskernick, Rough Tor must have been an incredibly important place - as Aubrey once said of Avebury, it was, to Stonehenge, 'as a parish church to a cathedral' (as it happened, Aubrey went on to deny this). Leskernick to Rough Tor is like that. But I see the Leskernick people crossing over Brown Willey full of excitement and anticipation and wonder. Sure, bring gifts of tin. Driving their herds before them. Meeting up with friends and relatives. Taking part in communal endeavours. Collecting and placing stones around the tor. Perhaps, as Wayne suggested tonight, the Leskernick people were specialists, were pastoralists and they exchanged their products for those of the mixed economy practiced by the people of Rough Tor.

Tuesday, June 16.

Another beautiful day. Hotter than yesterday. Jan and I and Henry bought wine and bread and cheese and nuts and buns. We met up with Wayne and Sarah. (Chris had gone to Bodmin with Jeremy to get film). We walked round Rough Tor. Such a fine walk, the springy turf, the stone walls, house circles ...

We started up the clitter slope and began to look at some more of our flagged features. There's no doubt that, although I am convinced that there are some

features, I'm still more cautious than the others. Still feel that some of the flagged places may be the result of clitter flow, accumulations in hollows and against backstops. I felt, too, this morning as we discussed whether something had or hadn't been moved, that we risked losing sight of the amazing natural formations within the clitter formed - little amphi-theatres, deep drops, massive overhangs, great uprights. All things that would fill the prehistoric people with wonderment, that would be wound around with legends and stories. I felt we shouldn't get too hung up on people actually moving things around. It seemed as though *we* need them to *do* things, but there could be so many acts and actions without them physically moving rock. I'm not saying the moving isn't important. It is and they do it. But it is only part of the story.

More overhangs and 'chambers'. A sense that there were entry ways through the rocks to the under world. A suggestion, too, made by Wayne, that while the tors might be the work of the gods, the great overhangs etc. might have been seen as the work of the ancestors, early superhuman people, more powerful than those that lived now. I don't want gods, but maybe ancestral spirits in the high places, with the work of the superhuman ancestors below. Perhaps, I wondered, when human beings copied these great formations - creating dolmens or cists or whatever - they took on some of the power of these superhuman ancestors ...

Early lunch. It was very nice having Jan there. Afterwards everyone slept - a strange assortment of poses. I eventually wandered off and had a look at things, then Jeremy came down off the hill, some chat ... then a quick round up of the last markers ... Down the hill again. An interesting session bringing together and writing down impressions. And then an even more interesting - at least I thought it more interesting - discussion about ideas about Rough Tor, comparisons with Leskernick ... very wide ranging and cumulative.

We thought we'd walk from the stone circle to the tor doing a narrative. Having talked a lot about people moving across the moors from Leskernick to RT we wanted to follow them up the hill. At least I think that's what I wanted to do. We walked to the centre of the circle. That was fine. But then which direction? We followed the direction of the largest upright. Which took us close to the menhir outside the later Bronze Age wall. It was all fairly inconclusive. We trekked across the eastern end of the site. No sense of

procession. And up to the col, and then through a very diminutive 'door' in the crumbled enclosure wall. It really hadn't worked. As a narrative. Or as a procession. But as we walked along the top, on the green turf among the enormous piled plates of pale granite - 'God's cow-pats' said Jeremy -, as we looked down a tunnel through the rocks, and then moved up past the remnants of the cairn built against the tor ... it was awesome. And looking far, far out over the landscape, being on top of the world, there was - what? - a sense of the sacred, something that was outside of the everyday world. It was - it is - a place of wonderment, enchantment and power.

Leskernick, invisible from below, is visible from the hilltop. A little grey hill, not in silhouette, not sky-lined, simply a little grey hill set against a larger green hill (Beacon). As Chris says, the greyness, which is its stoniness, makes it different from all the hills around. It is at once very modest *and* special. Which, I guess, is what we've always know.

I made my way down the hill following the sheep paths. I felt so pleased to have been up there on the top.

We all came back to our house 39. Jan, too, had been up to the tor. We had wine and bread and cheese and so on. We were all, I think, very contented. And then we strung out along the way home. And then, getting out of the car, having done a bit of shopping, the tiredness, bone-weariness, hit. Jan and I have slumped the evening away ...

Wednesday, June 17

Weather. Raining. In the morning moved around the western settlement area with Chris and Henry for a while as they videoed and narrated the shaman's house, the mini-tor and some of the clitter structures. Eventually, the weather not improving, I found Jan, collected Ian (of the arthritic knees) from Chris's car, and took both to Bodmin. Bought food, had coffee, returned along a windy road across the moors, and prepared supper for Dave Hoolie and the rest.

A good evening. Dave Hoolie quietly buzzing along, showing us photos of encircled grounders, stuff on the Scillies, stuff at Smollacombe ... The conversation gets a bit soporific, but wakes a bit when it turns to questions

of Cornish identity and pasties. There's no question but that he'll help Henry and Patrick.

No sign that Dave will ever leave. Eventually Wayne rises, the others follow, Jan goes off towards the bedroom ... Reluctantly, twenty minutes later, Dave's on his way. A lovely man.

Thursday, June 18

Weather again. Drove to Black Tor on my own, negotiated the barbed wire and such and walked over to the settlement. Started to 'see': mini-tor, compound, houses. Ferns and fox-gloves waving in the wind.

Wayne, Sarah, Henry and Patrick arrive. Henry and Patrick plunge off with the map, locating and flagging the houses. Adventurers/colonisers. Sarah, Wayne and I start annotating the house forms. The domesticating forces that follow in the rear. Chris hoves into sight. It rains harder. We shelter under the worn bent thorn tree. We vacate. Coffee at Jamaica Inn and then I and Patrick drive off, on our way to pick up Jan at Hooken and continue on to London.

Saturday, June 20

Henry and self up at Leskernick. Join Sue's tour. Tony and Mike are there. Good to see them both. I walk along the northern-most wall eliminating a few uprights from the plan, refining a bit. But not too displeased with what is already there. Move on to the enclosures above houses 1 and 2. The sun is shining. The pleasure of being very quiet on the hill.

After lunch I talk to the students for a while about the project - about what lies behind it, about the breadth of it. Much as with the Devon Archaeological Society. When it comes to questions they're much less forthcoming and then, like the Prehistoric Society the other year, they talk and ask questions as we walk along. They don't want to say things in front of their peer group. Henry and I walk then round the hill and in through the entrance to the western compound, up to house 20, across to the mini-tor and house 3 ... And then we send them back to the trenches.

We should, of course, have done this much earlier on, just as we should have formalised that one or two of the archaeologists came with us on the survey each day. It's quite stupid that because of the rift between Chris and Sue, the division fissures down through the rest of the hill community.

Henry and I go over to Black Tor. He escorts me round the settlement. His knowledge is now way ahead of mine. We look at shrines, and at various houses with interesting large stones close to their doorways. He stays, I drive on to Bodmin, this time to provision for an evening meal for Henry's Farewell, the geomorphologists, Tony and Mike, and our lot.

An amusing evening. Old Chris and Mark join us and there's a good discussion about archaeology. Chris arrives back from twin-minding looking rather strained and tired.

Monday June 22

Yesterday set fair. Tony and Mike, Stefan and Ed set off. I wrote a letter for Henry, tidied up a bit. Henry came over with all his gear. Chatting. [entry censored!]

We have a cup of bad coffee in Safeways, get to the station just before the train arrives. [bit censored] Henry's been fantastic this year - happy, buoyant, observant, funny ...!

On the spur of the moment decide to walk in from the south end of the moor, down the old track that we used to take when we camped near Jamaica Inn. It was wonderful - such a deep, old place. Ferns and fox-gloves (it's been the year of the *digitales*) waving in the breeze. Much the nicest way. And Leskernick visible from early on the quoit on the skyline.

Had some thoughts along the way about the structure of the book that we want to write on Leskernick. So, having booked a time to talk to Garry, I sat under a rock and wrote some stuff down. Agreed to dialogue with Sue after lunch.

Set off round the hill and found Chris dialoguing into his tape recorder with Stefan and Ed. Only came in on the tail end. They'd been walking the clitter and examining potentially moved stones. At this point what came across was

that many of the larger boulders perched on other boulders must have been people-placed. This is particularly evident where the boulder is not on the same line as the grounder below it. This means that very large stones have been moved with some frequency ...

Had lunch, went back to talk to Sue. She was busy down in the stone circle. It came on to rain. I cowered behind a stone. Eventually the rain passed and Sue arrived. Had a good dialogue. She, too, had been talking with Stefan and Ed and she too was fighting the natural/cultural divides and very much seeing the way in which people worked *with* the stone .. We also talked about writing the book and she said that she thought that she'd like to write a long paper, with Mike, on excavating on granite. They'd learned such a lot that it was worth getting it all down for other archaeologists. The beauty of this is that a lot of the more hard-nosed detailed recordings could go into this account. I showed her my outline and she was - genuinely - delighted. (I've rarely heard her express spontaneous pleasure before ...).

Ed and Stefan came to say 'goodbye', and then Chris, Wayne and Sarah came over to say they were going on to Black Tor. I stayed on and after a while went and talked with Gary. Again, I thought it was a fine and interesting dialogue about the walls, about his moving around the landscape as he opened the different trenches, about feeling close to the people who built the walls, about the 'ease' with which large stones can be moved ...

Both dialogues will, I think, work well.

It was getting on, the diggers were drifting off the hill. I thought I'd just go and look at the platform close to the quoit and then I'd go back to the car and to the promised meal and video in Chris's caravan. But then one of Pete Herring's colleagues hove into view, and then there was Pete and his gang making their way slowly across the moor, stopping and starting. It seemed rude to go ... I went down to meet them. Peter Gathercole was with them. I wasn't sure whether Pete wanted me to say anything but it rather emerged that he did. Unfortunately although I knew that Sue was having to rethink the stone on the edge of the circle I didn't know the details. I explained as best I could. I was slightly taken aback by the depth that she has now excavated into the bright orange rab. It was - I suddenly thought this morning as I lay in bed - like a wound. For the first time I registered the excavation as a wound on the hill.

Pete is not happy with Sue's hypothesis about the central stone. He accepts the stone 'grave' (my term), but not that the stone was simply taken out of the grave and skewed round. He's convinced that there must be a stone hole at one end or the other. The stone was taken from the natural and set upright (he noted with approval that Henry had mentioned that the circle was particularly visible from Codda). He envisaged it as a fine menhir which, only much later, was pulled out and pushed down - perhaps by Christians. He would like a small test pit to be put in at either end of the central stone.

We went up to the house and again I explained things as best I could. I also gave out Henry's questionnaire andn Pete was very good at promoting what he was doing and telling his gang that their views were important and so on. He is a lovely man.

Tony Blackman hove into view with a couple of his young archaeologists. He was friendly but aloof. I guess we should have been more forward in inviting him onto site. I did feel that it was important that I had stayed up, that it matters that we present ourselves and what we're doing.

Had tea with them. By this time getting very chilly. I left them and moved off, not entirely sure of the precise direction, but sure enough. Looked back often at the sunlight shafting down through the clouds over Rough Tor and at the little straggle of people silhouetted up by the quoit.

Discovered, after a while, that I was way off course. Climbed a hill with a tiny tor on the top and a scatter of rough clitter below on its southern side [discovered later that it was Beacon hill]. Eventually spied Jamaica Inn way to the west, and - just - the corrugated iron roofs of the house close to where the car was parked. Made my way up and down slope, through marsh, over barbed wire. As it happened it was a marvellous walk but tiring and also a little worrying as the sun sunk lower. Then I began to recognize - sort of - the valley I was in and then, yes, there was the ford ...

And so home to the campsite. In Chris's caravan they were deep into clitter talk. I was given a wonderful large plate of supper. I was starving and it tasted great. We looked at the video we'd made on Rough Tor which really hadn't worked. One needs, we realised, to stand back from the clitter structure rather than come up close. But, again, the geomorphs confirmed

that the perched stones must have been jacked up and perched by prehistoric people. The video of Chris and Henry talking their way round the mini-tor and the wrapped stones at Leskernick was more successful, but, as Chris said, it seems almost impossible to find a way to successfully show the clutter structures. Ed did some sketches of different formations, and that was good and instructive and something we'll need as part of the illustrations. In the discussion I picked up that many of the semi-circles are - can be - formed through periglacial action. It is very interesting that the things that we often felt more convinced about - like the small semi-circular stone settings - are probably 'natural', the things we were least convinced about - except for Wayne! - , like the perched stones, are cultural. I realise that I was also resistant because of the amount of labour involved. But then, as Wayne said, they're doing it at Stonehenge, so why not here? And as Gary suggested earlier, it often looks harder than it is - two people working well together and working *with* the rock can shift large boulders relatively easily. Our nature/culture divides are also a question of aesthetics - we somehow recognize and respond to the circles and small uprights more easily than to the rather massive, less evocative, perched stones.

Thinking about the perched stones, they're not so much perched as angled upwards - *opened*. *Opening* the rock, *creating crevices*, interstices, secret places. I think - but it would need checking - that the perched rocks are often associated with secret places under the rocks. I wonder if the two go together?

Both Chris and I were questioning the geomorphs as to whether their interpretations would be accepted/duplicated by other geomorphs. They seemed convinced that they would be - though obviously given so much is ambiguous there'd be a margin of uncertainty. It was interesting that the most cited and respected geomorphologist is (I think I heard them say) Harold Lamb, a man who died recently. In other words their 'science' is very stable and not subject to swings in fashion. Ergo there's a greater consensus of opinion. I suppose this begs the question about whether they might not all be 'seeing' in a particular way. I remember vaguely from reading Chalmers' 'This Thing Called Science' that you get these paradigmatic breakthroughs and then long plateaus of replication, until there's a build-up of non-fit and sense in which the paradigm was no longer answering the questions being posed.

I suspect that the sort of work that Stefan and Ed are doing with us, on the interface between nature and culture, has been under-questioned in geomorphology.

Off tomorrow for a long hike with Dave Hoolie.

Monday, June 22

And so it was. Long, I mean. And a fine, windy, good-walking day. We had Lesley the site photographer with us ...

To The Hurlers car-park. Through the circles, out across the moor to Tregarrick (check) tor. Another fine place - less of a cathedral than Rough Tor - perhaps in some ways more accessible but also full of secret places. A very strong sense of progression - into the compound, moving between the house platforms to the tor. Then, mainly round the back of the tor, the tor cairn. The sense that the back of the cairn is very special - out of sight.

As we'd come across the moor we had, before reaching the tor, passed a series of large paired cairns. A sense of intervisibilities and movement (restricted movement) between very distinctive ritual spaces, each with their own evocations and activities, but tied one to another and to the surrounding landscapes.

This sense of interconnections between arenas in people's life stories became more palpable as we walked from the tor down to the - what did Dave Hoolie call it? - 'embanked something'. More like a processional way. More like the Stonehenge cursus. And, like the cursus, the small cairns that dot to either side obviously stand in relation. Perhaps, too, its like the stone row and circles at Leskernick. Perhaps, too, the cairns on the southern edge of the Leskernick settlement also speak to the stone row.

And then beyond, and upslope, the settlement of Craddock Moor. Some fine large houses, a driveway - blocked at some point - and field boundaries just visible through the bracken. And, just outside the enclosure, and above, and not far from the driveway entrance, a really fine encircled grounder. A big flat stone - not something that rears up and makes its presence felt visually in the landscape - but something of great import. Ringed with stones. One of the things that has made its way into our consciousness this year is the

significance of *flat* rocks. The flat tabulars on the top of Leskernick which the wall does *not* run over. The flat tabulars below Rough Tor: one with its fine pyramidal upright sitting well back on it, others with 'chambers' below, others jacked up - *opened up* - creating fissures from which things could emanate, or into which things could be slipped. And the flat tabulars that make up the tors - the pancakes of rocks that must have been the nub of the ancestral creation myths. The ringed tor, the ringed grounder. Reiterations.

[long pause to do other things, so I've rather lost the thread] We lunched and lounged at Craddock and after that I guess my attention rather slipped. There was a tor - a more romantic gothic sort of place, the rocks more cragged and creviced. With a fine short slide of rocks straight off the top. More nature than culture though there was a tor cairn.

Then off again. Dave Hoolie always underplayed distances ... 'shall we wander across to ...?' 'Shall we amble ...?' Such 'ambles' were, by any other definition, fairly long field marches. But we didn't mind (or at least I only minded on the sharper upslopes). Dave and Chris strode on ahead, while behind, in various combinations, came Wayne and us three women. Sometimes Wayne would suddenly spurt off, showing considerable agility, over and up crags, into and out of holes. A more darting inquisitive movement. I got to talk to both Lesley and Sarah as we brought up the rear....

So we looked at three small cairns in various states of disrepair, disregard, and dismemberment. As we got back to the car I whispered to Chris that a cream tea would be nice. He said I should suggest it to Dave. I did. He accepted with alacrity. So cream teas at the Minions in a cafe that had just catered for 31 Solstice sun-gazers. Just the place for Henry...

I think I've lost the order of events, but who cares? Off we went to Smollacombe - what a nice name... Dave took Wayne in his car so that Chris's wouldn't be so over-loaded over the deep ruts and dips. Nonetheless - no doubt because he still had me in the car as well as Lesley and Sarah - we occasionally grounded, and sometimes we got out and walked. Up and up and along the forest track - once an old railway line. It seemed strange to be entering woods - dark coniferous plantations - after so long on the turfey stoney hills. On and on. We stopped to examine an old Dorothy Dudley dig, and to watch in amazement a machine that cut, uprooted, stripped, de-

branched and sectioned a whole tree all in one action ... On and on, walking up through the silent forest, with thick silent forest mulch below and only the cracking of the dead branches as we passed through. The light sepulchral. Mossy walls here and there. Then out of the forest and across a brackened, blueberried, treacherously stony forest opening (Wayne prancing down some invisible deer tracks that he'd found) to the foot of a tor and up onto the huge slab rocks on top. More investigations, more sitting, more - wearily - re-traversing the treacherous stones, the silent forest ... Back into the cars, back down the track. Out and up into the wood again ... to an eerie place of small mounds set within the trees. Presumably a cairn field ...

And then back to Dave's house where we sunk into sofas and chairs and then ate a really fine vegetable curry meal made by Dave and Jenny. By the time we'd eaten and drunk I was fairly horizontal. Eventually Chris - who fortunately seemed not to be smitten with sleep - drove us in various states of quietude, doze and deep sleep back to the campsite.

We all slept well.

This morning, more weather and, with some relief, we agreed to stay put till lunch. Chris and I eventually had several coffees [self censored].

Thursday, June 26

Spent Tuesday evening in a pub, Port William, on the coast. Pub was OK, but bland. The cliffs were massive and dense. Dark schists. Apparently the slate was shipped out from here. It seemed rather a desolate place. Made me realise that the quality of the granite outcrops and the clutter on Leskernick is rather light.

Some interesting conversations - mainly between Wayne and Chris (I did miss Henry not being there). About time and variability. With Chris defending the indefensible with a high octane Levi-Straussian dismissal of history. (I'm exaggerating of course - but only a little!) There comes a moment in the evening, it doesn't happen often - or maybe I don't stay up late enough to see it - when Chris, with a slightly drunken fiery glaze in his eyes, takes off. Finger wagging, totally concentrated, he declaims his beliefs - or rather, his beliefs as they take his fantasy at that particular moment ... Not Mesmerising - on the way towards a shamanistic trance!

Yesterday, raining in the morning. We held off, hung around, discussed this and that, chatted with Patrick and then set off at 11. The sun miraculously did its stuff. Chris went off with Sarah to finish describing clitter structures and to record a corridor narrative, and even, towards the end of the afternoon, to start another clitter wrap (rap!). Wayne went off house re-re-recording. Patrick went off to have long intimate conversations with people. And I went round the southern settlement looking at every cairn. Very good, very salutary, very concentrated. You can never judge by your first reaction, you have to keep on going round, angling it, following the line of a possible curb, seeing how it sits in the wall. It was very helpful to have talked to Pete and to register the idea that some of the cairns were built when the walls went out of use: that they used the walls to build the cairns. I certainly found some cases of that. And also of what could be called breach cairns - where the wall has been opened up by people bringing horses and carts up on the hill and piling the stones to either side. Then there are 'cairns' which are really no more than stone piles. And often the small stones are piled against or over a grounder. Some cairns - about 5 - got eliminated. One turned out, I think, to be a clitter structure - very close to the corridor wall and to house 28. And one, excitingly, might be a very large platform cairn. It's at the bottom of the corridor, very close to the most southwesterly of the enclosures, and just below house 28. I'll show it to the others today.

Ate lunch by myself and, as I went round, stopped quite often for a quick coffee so as not to get cairn-lag. By quarter to five I'd finished the southern settlement and had had enough of cairns.

We ended up having supper in the Rising Sun. Chris quizzing Wayne in a rather un-Chris-like way. I suspect that he reckons that if I can be 'nosy' about other people's lives so can he! A very sweet natured young man came up to talk - his father farms the Codda hill, he's one of six brothers, he rides the moors - and clearly loves the life. He was interested in 'archaeology' - pronouncing it like a word he's only just got his tongue round. He described being up on the moor in the snow. Described all the things that had to be done to keep the farm going. Patrick was listening quietly. It turned out he'd already talked to Wayne (the young man's) cousin. I felt quite envious of Patrick's appointed task of talking to people like this about their lives and their perceptions of place and self.

Got back very tired.

Friday, June 26

I went into Launceston to visit the museum curator, Jean Brown. Henry had talked to one of the custodians and they seemed to be quite positive about having an exhibition.

Between car-park and museum the skies opened and the rain swept down. I arrived totally dripping. The museum is in a fine old house and seems wonderfully old fashioned. A bit of this and a bit of that. A motherly woman came down the stairs, offered me tea, took me into the temporary exhibition room which housed a very user-friendly exhibition on hats. She started rather cautiously, then became very keen. She took me down and showed me a smaller room – one which housed a very interesting account of the colonisation of Tasmania by King, who came from Launceston and named a township after his birthplace. There were some sickening accounts of some of the convicts sent out from Cornwall ... The room is small but will do well. We then retired to her room and she came up with an amplitude of ideas – which I've written down elsewhere. I met her husband who reckoned that Henry and Patrick would have a problem getting Cornish people to *really* talk. He told an excellent tale or two about their reticence and humour. He directed me to the second hand bookshop to find a copy of 'Cornish Gold', she directed me to the North Cornwall Art Officer to find out about grants. The art officer was out, I bought the book, and my last pastie for the season, and drove back to the camp-site feeling very happy about the way the exhibition was beginning to take on a life.

Patrick caught me. We spent over two hours doing his questionnaire on Cornish landscape. In retrospect I thought that, though the questions are really good and searching, there's a problem with having to answer them off the top of one's head. There were a few I'd have come at rather differently if I'd had time to think about them a bit more. Anyways I thought Patrick was ace at keeping one on track and going along ...

And so caravan all tidied up and on my way ...